

Prostate cancer study's dramatic results

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(PhysOrg.com) -- The risk of death for men suffering from locally advanced or high-risk prostate cancer could be dramatically cut, according to a new international study involving Cardiff University.

Professor Malcolm Mason, Head of Oncology and Palliative Medicine at the School of Medicine and Medical advisor to Cancer Research Wales, has been leading the UK arm of the major international research trial into prostate cancer since 1998, when he was appointed as the UK Chief Investigator, leading the study in this country for the Medical Research Council.

With their colleagues from Canada and North America, Professor Mason and the Medical Research Council team recently revealed the results of the study at the prestigious annual American Society of Clinical Oncology conference in Chicago.

They presented new evidence showing that [survival rates](#) are significantly better if radiation is added to standard hormone treatments when treating [men](#) whose cancer has spread beyond the prostate.

The results of the study could have an almost immediate impact on the treatment of men with locally advanced prostate cancer worldwide and in Wales, where prostate cancer is the most common cancer affecting men. In 2008, 553 men in Wales died of prostate cancer, and around 10,000 men in the UK are killed by prostate cancer every year.

The current standard treatment for men whose prostate cancer has not

responded to either radiation or surgery is androgen deprivation therapy, or ADT, which works by reducing the levels of certain [male hormones](#) that promote [cancer growth](#).

The new study looked at a combination treatment, and assigned 1,205 men to receive either hormones plus radiation or hormones alone. After seven years, 74 percent of men receiving both treatments were alive compared to 66 percent of the others. Those on both treatments lived an average of six months longer than those given just hormones.

Some 150 patients in the study were entered from hospitals in Wales, 73 of them from Velindre Hospital in Cardiff.

Speaking about the trial - the result of more than a decade's work - Professor Mason said: "The study has already been hailed as something that may change clinical practice. Based on the evidence we have, it would result in the prevention of 43 per cent of deaths from prostate cancer in men with localised but high-risk prostate cancer, or locally advanced cancer.

"Such men make up around 40 percent of all new cases of prostate cancer in the UK, and therefore these results have the potential, worldwide, to prevent thousands of deaths from prostate cancer every year. The success of this study is a real testament to international collaboration, and to the close working relationship between the National Cancer Institute of Canada and the UK Medical Research Council."

Liz Andrews, Charity Director at Cancer Research Wales, said: "We're delighted to hear about Professor Mason's success and the positive consequences it could have for men diagnosed with prostate cancer. The impact of this study on [prostate cancer](#) treatment is a real success story and testimony to Welsh-based cancer research."

Provided by Cardiff University

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